

# Welcome to U.S. Embassy Malabo!



# Overview of Equatorial Guinea

➤ The Portuguese explorer, Fernão do Pó, seeking a route to India, is the first European credited with Having landed on the island of Bioko in 1471.



➤ EG is composed of a continental portion (Rio Muni) plus five inhabited volcanic islands; the capital city of Malabo is on the island of Bioko (also known as Fernando Po).

➤ The second largest city in Equatorial Guinea is Bata, which lies on the Atlantic coast of Rio Muni.

# Overview of Equatorial Guinea

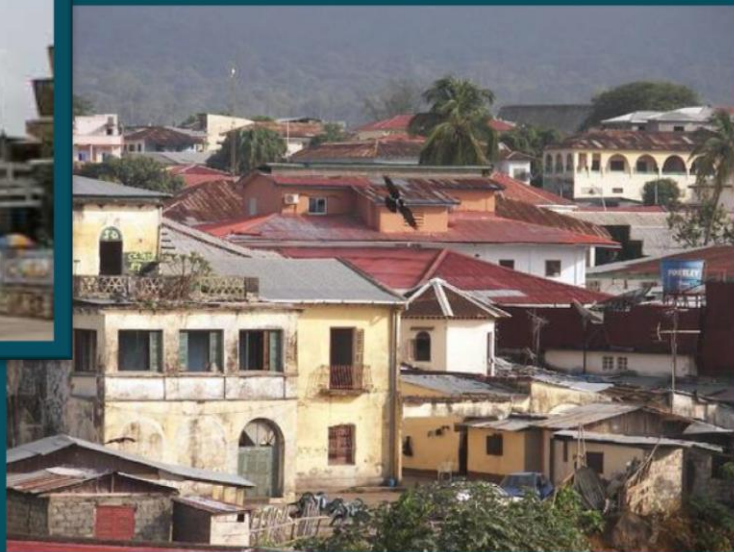


- The total size of Equatorial Guinea's mainland and islands is 28,000 square km, slightly smaller than the State of Maryland.
- The population of the country is approximately 630,000.
- Equatorial Guinea is the only African country with Spanish as its official language.
- Equatorial Guinea has experienced rapid economic growth due to the discovery of large offshore oil reserves, and in the last decade has become sub-Saharan Africa's third largest oil exporter.





# YOUR LIFE IN MALABO



# The Environment

## Climate:

- Located 2 degrees North of the equator, Equatorial Guinea has a tropical climate which is hot and humid, but the normal cloud cover moderates the temperatures somewhat.
- Bioko's dry season lasts from November to March, and the rest of the year is rainy.
- The average annual precipitation varies from 1,930 mm (76 inches) at Malabo to 10,900 mm (36 feet) at Ureka on Bioko.
- The average temperature ranges in Malabo are from 21 degrees Celsius (70 degrees Fahrenheit) to 32 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit) all year.

# Pollution :

- With the exception of burning trash and car exhaust, there is little air pollution.
- Piles of trash can be seen in streets, but a greater effort is being made to keep the city clean.
- Tap water is generally not suitable for drinking, therefore a water distiller or bottled water is necessary.
- Pollen, airborne dust and dirt can be an issue in the dry season, and especially during Harmattan.



# Security Concerns:

- Violent crime is extremely rare against expats.
- Crimes of opportunity such as pick-pocketing and breaking into a vehicle, can be avoided with common sense and vigilance.
- Harassment by local police and military can be an issue.
- Post provides RSO-trained security for all housing.





# Endemic Infectious Diseases



- Malaria-carrying mosquitos are prevalent and anti-malarial prophylaxis is strongly recommended.
- Proof of yellow fever vaccination is required for entry and exit of the country.
- Typhoid, cholera and hepatitis can be contracted from drinking the tap water or eating unsterilized fruit or street food. Immunizations for these, and for rabies, are required.

Date		Signature and professional status of vaccinator Signature et titre du vaccinateur	Manufacturer & batch number of vaccine Fabricant du vaccin et numéro du lot	Official stamp Cachet of centre de
9.4.08		YELLOW FEVER CENTRE: UKYFVC2220 37 NORTH AUDLEY STREET, LONDON W1K 6ZL. TEL: +44 (0) 207 408 1164 FAX: +44 (0) 207 408 1165	STAMARIL® Lot: A6023-2 Exp: 08-2009	



# The Lay of the Land

- Sidewalks and streets are often poorly maintained, with frequent pot holes.
- The rainy season and its attendant heavy mud, can make getting around dangerous to impossible, esp. for those using canes or wheelchairs.
- Wheelchair ramps and handicap parking are non-existent and few buildings are wheelchair accessible.

# Housing

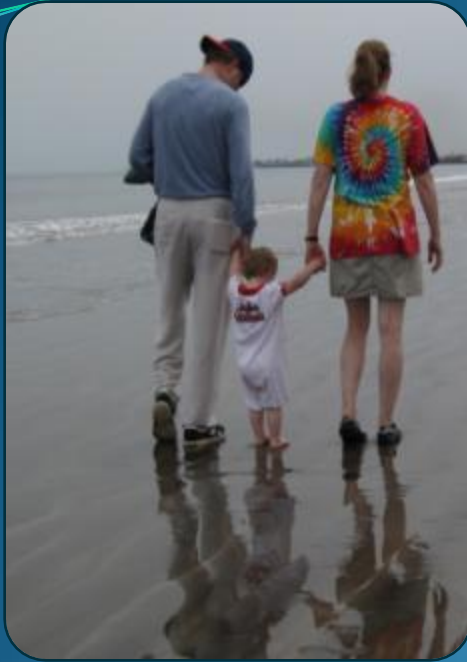
Embassy housing currently includes three- and four-bedroom single-family homes, and two smaller three-bedroom townhomes. Houses typically lack built-in closets.

➤ Example of a 3 Bedroom townhome with balconies, and small backyard.\

➤ Example of a 4 Bedroom home with large yard area, garden, garage and driveway.



# The Community

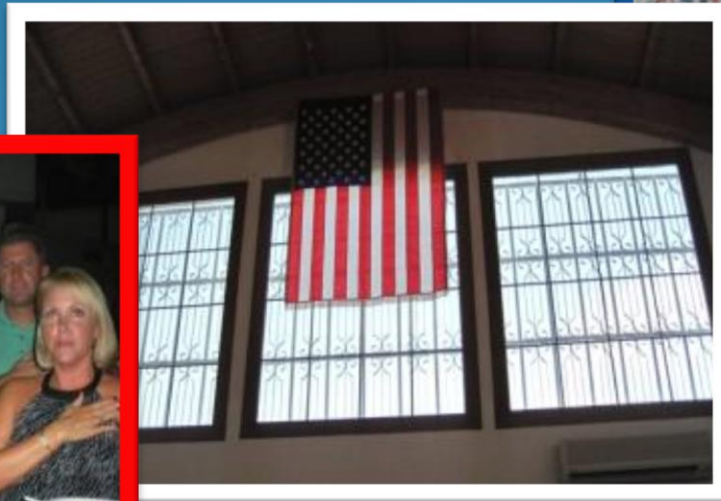


- The local culture and the Mission are very family friendly!
- With an American community of about 600 and international expat community with significant numbers of Europeans, North Africans, Middle- Easterners, Sub-Saharan Africans, and Chinese. one can enjoy an active social life.



# Morale Among Expats:

- Within the Embassy, employees enjoy the experience of working in a small post with wide and varied responsibilities.
- Despite being a hardship post, high morale exists in the American & Expat communities.





# Dress at Work and Play:



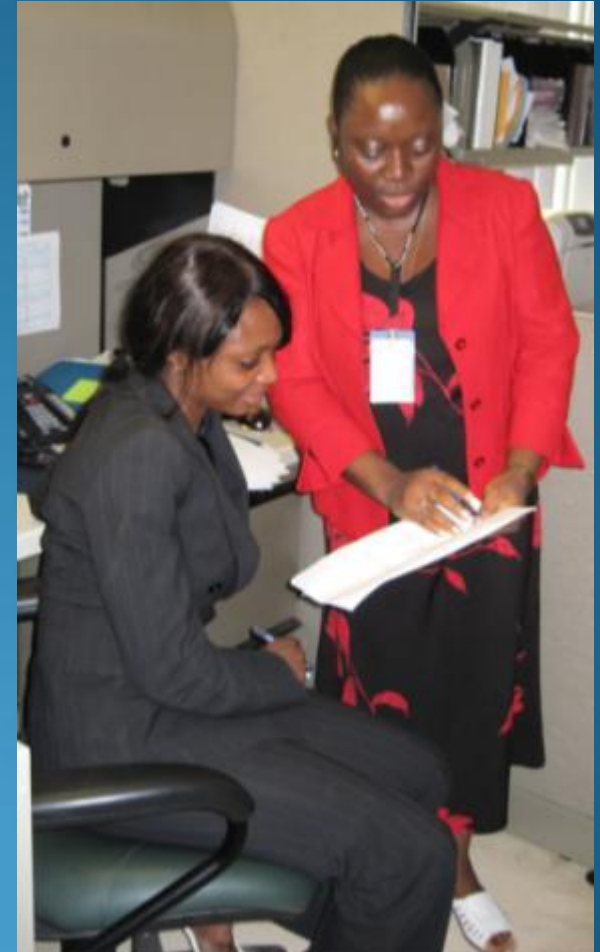
➤ For work and social events business casual, business formal, and West African styles are appropriate.

➤ Both European and West African dress are worn in the local community.



# Languages & Daily Life

- The ability to speak basic Spanish will optimize your experience. However, one can survive using a phrasebook for specific scenarios, e.g. shopping, dining, going to the pharmacy.
- French is also an official language, and is especially useful in commercial and diplomatic settings.
- Many Equatoguineans, including Embassy staff, are fluent in English, Spanish, and French.
- Spanish and French classes are offered locally for a reasonable price.





# Cost of Groceries and Household Supplies



- Grocery stores generally offer a fair selection of food and household supplies.
- Shortages of bread, milk and eggs can occur; one learns to keep these items well-stocked.
- Prices are expensive compared to the US or Europe, as everything is imported.
- Produce is available, but limited in variety, and prices can vary considerably depending on where you shop.
- Vendors may have both an expat price and a local price for the same item, reflecting the difference in buying power between the two groups.



# Regarding Your Consumable Allowance...

This is a hardship post; making full use of the Consumables Allowance will go far toward keeping you well and happy. You will save  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$  price on everything you use by bringing it from the U.S.

## Sample of typical grocery prices:

- ✓ 1 lb mozzarella: \$9.00
- ✓ 1lb shaved turkey breast: \$8.50
- ✓ 6 egg: \$1.75
- ✓ 12 oz bag of pasta: \$5.00
- ✓ 16 oz can tomato sauce: \$1.75
- ✓ 1lb bag of flour: \$3.00
- ✓ 1 liter milk: \$3.00
- ✓ 1 2 oz bottle Herbal Essence: \$9.00
- ✓ 1 box pampers 40ct: \$38.00
- ✓ 1 small jar artichoke hearts: \$30.00 (yes, \$30)
- ✓ 3 pack of corn niblets: \$5.00
- ✓ 12 oz bottle Heinz ketchup: \$5.50
- ✓ 8oz soy sauce: \$10.00
- ✓ 1lb ground beef: \$6.00
- ✓ 1 liter bottle EV olive oil: \$10.00
- ✓ 1 box Rice Krispies: \$ 8.00
- ✓ 1 jar of apple sauce: \$10.00

## Examples of items to consider:

### Laundry

Detergent, dryer sheets, Oxyclean

### Bath

Soap, toilet paper, shampoo, feminine products, razors ; any toiletry you use!

### Kitchen

Mixes, spices, jams, pasta, peanut butter, flour, corn meal, brown sugar, soups, sauces, salad dressings, ethic food ingredients, paper towels, plastic food storage bags and wrap, dishwashing soap, foil, BBQ items, and condiment s, freeze-dried celery.

### Home

Seeds to garden, cleaning products, garbage bags, bug spray, coils or candles for mosquitoes.

### Pets

Food, medications, litter, shampoo, treats



# Availability and Cost of Domestic Help



- Malabo is considerably more expensive than other African posts.
- A housekeeper /nanny may earn from \$300-500 per month for fulltime, 6 days a week.
- Finding honest and reliable domestic help may prove to be difficult, but not impossible.



# Schools:

## ➤ The French School is a private school:

- Classes are conducted in French and follow the French curriculum system;
- All tests are sent to France for correction;
- All students, ages 3 to 16, are in classrooms with 12 to 20 students;
- Children, six and under, can be accepted into the school without fluency in French;
- However, children 7 and above are expected to be fluent in French.

## ➤ The Spanish School:

- This is a public school subsidized by the Spanish government.
- The school follows the Spanish curriculum system is staffed with Spanish teachers.
- Tests are graded by local staff.
- Admission is open, subject to space.
- Though the quality of the education is said to be good, overcrowding is a problem;
- Classes are taught primarily in Spanish.

▪ Other private, religious, and government subsidized-schools are present, of varying quality.

# Quality of Medical Care Available:

- There is no health unit at the Embassy Mission; employees get medical support from the Regional Medical Officer in Lagos, Nigeria, and the nurse-practitioner at Embassy Yaounde in Cameroon.
- Healthcare in Malabo is adequate for non-emergency cases.
- El Centro Medico La Paz, in Bata, is a new hospital offers high-quality care from highly trained doctors and staff. The hospital can handle non-critical emergencies & services include prenatal care, dentistry, optometry, ENT, radiology and routine surgeries.
- La Clinica Guadalupe, in Malabo, is staffed by doctors and nurses from Tunisia, Lebanon, China and Israel. The quality of care is good, but the range of care is limited.





# Pet Care :



- There is only one local veterinarian.
- He is quite knowledgeable, but the scope of his practice is limited.
- He cannot perform surgical measures, but can administer wound care, vaccinations and other minor medical procedures.





# Available Gyms & Workout Facilities :

- The Embassy does not have a fitness center.
- Gym memberships are available locally, but very expensive .
- The sidewalk along the main airport road is excellent for walking and running.
- There are some good roads and trails for both mountain and tourist biking.



# Comments About Credit Cards and ATMs.



- Currently, the use of credit cards is almost non-existent in the country of EG.
- The Embassy cashier provides accommodation-exchange for Embassy personnel, and can convert up to \$800 per week per employee to local currency.



# What Type of Automobile is Suitable to Bring?



- Because of Rugged Terrain and Lack of Parts or Service, an SUV is the optimum car; for servicing & parts Toyota and Nissan are popular.
- The main roads and some leading to the interior are excellent, but side streets, e.g. those close to the chancery, are often in very poor condition.
- During the rainy season, pot holes, large areas of erosion on roads and sidewalks develop quickly within the city and its neighborhoods.
- Excess mud and flooding can add wear and tear to your vehicle.
- The vehicle should be fully-serviced before shipping. **SHIP PARTS and AN EXTRA SET OF TIRES and KEYS**, because maintenance is expensive.
- There are no local restrictions specific to diplomatic vehicles.



# Communication

## Cell Phones

- The Embassy issues cell phones to incoming employees for official business.
- A prepaid phone card is the predominant cell phone plan.
- Purchasing a cell phone locally can range from \$30 for a basic model, to \$900 for the I-phone.





# English-Language Newspapers and TV; the Internet

- There are no English-language newspapers in E.G and no bookstores or news stands of any kind.
- Armed Forces Network (AFN) is available through the embassy, with an excellent selection of current US news and entertainment programming .
- DSTV, a South African-based satellite TV company, offers over 100 English-language channels for around \$100 per month, with additional fees for new customers.
- The Embassy provides access to high-speed internet at the chancery.
- Dial-up is available locally, but is expensive, slow, and unreliable.



# Mail at Post:

- Post has both incoming and outgoing Diplomatic pouch; service for unofficial /parcel post is approximately twice monthly.
- Items ordered online from major retailers can arrive within 2-6 weeks (i.e. Amazon, diapers.com, JC Penny).
- Because of the large expat community, people are normally willing to carry mail for you when they are leaving for R & R.
- Bring US Postage Stamps or purchase online, to mail letters through the pouch.



# Interesting Things To Do In The Area:

- Hike in the mountains of Moka where the temperature is always several degrees cooler!
- Visit colonial-era cocoa and banana plantations.
- Spend a day at the beach snorkeling and gathering beautiful conch shells.
- Enjoy a weekend in Bata at the “French Beach”, with a private gourmet chef and air-conditioned bungalows.
- Run or walk the HASH.
- Fish
- Visit centuries-old wooden churches nestled in mountain villages.





# Local Entertainment

- There currently no museums or movie theaters in E.G.
- Local oil companies have weekly activities such as: international cuisine night, quiz night, live music night and karaoke.
- There is a good selection of restaurants and European style discos.
- The French and Spanish embassies provide live entertainment through their cultural centers.



- There is a very active Malabo Spouse Group.

- This is an excellent post to indulge such hobbies as photography, painting, writing, gardening, floral arrangement, watching movies and reading.



# The End

